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## THE DIFFUSION OF IMMIGRATION

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Since January of 1850 to July of 1903, 18,998,383, or say nineteen million immigrants have come to this country, which gives an average of just about three hundred and fifty-five thousand a year for this period of fifty-three years and a half. Apart from this average, and taking the year from July 1st, 1902, to July 1st, 1903, by itself, the enormous number of eight hundred and fifty thousand, in round numbers, was reached. In the previous twelve months there had been, in round numbers, six hundred and forty thousand.

It is impossible to say whether these great figures will be kept up. A falling off from certain countries is sure to happen. Italy cannot continue for long to send us the number that she has been doing—over two hundred thousand last year. But whether the decreases that there may be from some countries will not be made up by increases from others is a question which does not permit of any absolute solution. Still it seems reasonably safe to prophesy that the yearly average of three hundred and fifty-five thousand will be kept up for another generation. In round numbers this will mean a total of thirteen millions of immigrants in the next thirty-six years. And judging from the records of the past about seven-eighths of these immigrants will be between fourteen and forty-five years old. About two-thirds of them will be very poor, and will have less than thirty dollars of money apiece. And the average of ignorance will be high; at least a fifth will not know how to read or write, while scarcely any will have the simple education that a boy or girl can get at the common schools in this country.

Whether this coming immigration will be of advantage to this country is not an easy question to answer. It is clear that our material development would have been slower had the large immigration of the past fifty years not occurred. Assuming that there is still enormous material development to be made, which is

quite certain, and assuming that to do so *rapidly* is of benefit (which I think is doubtful), then the coming immigration will be of benefit. No other way in which this immigration will be of benefit suggests itself to me.

Does this immigration bring with it dangers to this country? This I think can be easily answered in the affirmative. We are trying to govern a great territory with a large population by a system of government which demands as a prerequisite for continued success, certain political and moral beliefs, and an intelligent interest on the part of its inhabitants in public affairs. It is not sufficient to have a Constitution and members of legislatures. It is necessary that the moral and political truths which underlie that Constitution be commonly understood and highly valued. It is also necessary that legislators should be the political representatives of a people who, however divided by party politics, are united in an intelligent effort to realize in their government these moral and political conceptions; and that as such representatives they should at all times be animated by these truths and should try to embody them in practical legislation.

The introduction of nineteen millions of immigrants in the past fifty years who were wholly ignorant of our political notions has lowered the average political intelligence of the country, and by so far affected representative government to its detriment. This can be readily seen in some of our cities where great numbers of immigrants have collected, and where their political influence is most strongly felt. Here a representative and republican government no longer exists except in name and outward form. Tammany Hall is not the kind of government that this country was founded to give its inhabitants. And if its defense is that it is a government such as the majority of the people of New York are pleased with, then we see the absence in that majority of the moral and political conceptions necessary to sustain a republican form of government. We can see the same effects to a greater or less extent elsewhere; and as immigrants continue to come over, all of whom are ignorant of the political and moral truths which underlie our form of government, we are likely to see them increase. If there were only enough of such immigrants they would tolerate a mild tyrant in the White House as they do a mild city boss.

There is another danger I wish to mention. If one considers the American people from say 1775 to 1860, it is clear that a well-defined national character was in process of formation. What variations there were, were all of the same type and these variations would have slowly grown less and less marked. It needs little study to see of what great value to any body of men, women and children a national or racial type is. It furnishes a standard of conduct by which any one can set his course. The world is a difficult place in which to live, and to establish moral standards has been one of the chief occupations of mankind. Without such standards man feels as a mariner without a compass. Religious rules, laws and customs are only the national character in the form of standards of conduct. Now national character can only be formed in a population which is stable. The repeated introduction into a body of men of other men of different type or types cannot but tend to prevent its formation. Thus the nineteen millions of immigrants that have landed have tended to break up the type which was forming and to make the formation of any other type difficult. Every million more will only intensify this result, and the absence of a national character is a loss to every man, woman and child. It will show itself in our religions, rules of conduct, in our laws, in our customs.

These and other dangers which various observers have noted have led to some agitation for the passing of laws that would restrict immigration. Now to restrict immigration by a few thousand would not be of any particular value, and none of the laws which have been so far suggested would have a greater effect than this. There is no likelihood that any law could be passed that would materially reduce immigration—say cut it down one-half or even one-third—and before such a law could be passed a great many very intelligent and influential people would have to be convinced that the cutting down of our immigration would not be a detriment to this country. Personally I believe that these people in all good faith lose sight of the sure and lasting benefit through fear of a possible detriment.

We must therefore consider how to minimize the dangers of a yearly immigration of not less than three hundred and fifty thousand poor and ignorant people for an indefinite period. It is obvious that

the dangers which the immigration of the past has contained have been minimized by the great size of the country and the scattering of the immigrants over it. They are found in every State, from Maine to California, from Canada to the Gulf. This has enabled them to be brought in contact with the native born, and both have been modified by the process. The result has not been in any proper sense of the word "assimilation," but whenever immigrants have been diffused they have rapidly been educated so as to get along with the native American.

But this natural diffusion is ceasing, and we not only find that immigrants tend naturally to the cities but when there form colonies, so that we have "little Germanies," "little Hungaries," and "little Italies," and "Syrian colonies" and "Jewish colonies."

These colonies tend to perpetuate among the immigrants that ignorance of our laws, customs and political and moral notions that is one of their great dangers. Nor so long as they are denizens of these colonies do they in any sense of the word become Americans. They remain Italians, Germans, Russians and Hungarians. Obviously so long as immigration continues these colonies will tend to grow, and by their growth magnify the dangers already mentioned.

Since we cannot depend on the immigrants to scatter, means must be taken to diffuse them throughout the country and to localize them away from the great cities.

It might be supposed that this would be a very difficult thing to accomplish; it would be so if the immigrant himself objected, but for the most part the immigrant does not object provided certain requirements are met with. These requirements are as follows:

*First.* The place where the immigrant is to be located must be one where the climate is about such as he has been accustomed to, for otherwise he would immediately be dissatisfied and would drift to the cities.

*Second.* He must be assured of a reasonable livelihood in excess of what he would earn in his own country. He has come to this country because he thinks it is easy to make money, and, relatively to what he makes abroad, it is easy; consequently his hopes and expectations must be sustained.

*Third.* He must have his railroad fare paid to his destination, for he usually does not have the money to do so himself.

*Fourth.* The immigrant must not be wholly solitary; if he is set down in no matter how good a place to earn his livelihood, in no matter how pleasing a climate, he will be uncomfortable and tend to move away unless he can have a few of his own countrymen within comparatively easy reach.

These four requisites are easy to arrange for. Good management, a comparatively small fund of money, and an intelligent understanding of the immigrant are all that are needed.

There is a fifth and last requisite, to wit:

He must be protected both as regards a shelter over his head and food enough to eat while getting settled and until his livelihood begins coming in. This is not a serious matter where his livelihood begins shortly after arrival, but where he is expected to make it out of the earth, which will be the common case, he, and his family, if he has one, must be looked out for until the crop is sown and harvested, a period of not less than six months.

There are many land owners who will furnish immigrants with houses and will make very satisfactory terms with them for the use or ownership of land, but the keeping the immigrant and his family until the first harvest comes in is the difficulty in most cases. To overcome this obstacle a large fund is needed. Unless such a fund is raised little or nothing can be done. An excellent example of such a fund confined in its use to a particular race is seen in the Hirsch endowment and the colonization plans which have been carried out so satisfactorily in connection with this fund. The Salvation Army has also various schemes of colonization, but their desire to get the government to back them with its money seems to me a mistake. The Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants is trying to raise the necessary funds to establish large and small colonies of Italians.

These are the only efforts that I know of which are being made to diminish the damages attendant upon our large immigration by scattering the immigrants and getting them to settle away from the cities.